

made to eliminate error have been so successful that it is very low indeed. It compares very favourably with other countries, including British Post Offices.

41. In the course of your investigation of errors in the Post Office, have you not found that a great many of the errors are caused by the people posting the letters?—Yes, that is so; though, of course, I do not wish to disclaim all errors. In the Postmaster-General's report for the year 1915 it is shown that 6,844 inquiries were made during that year into complaints of postal packets alleged to have been posted and not delivered. In the case of 4,582, or over half of the total number of cases investigated, as the result of the inquiries made by the Department the packets were either traced or accounted for. In 1,020 cases the sender was responsible, and in 1,080 cases the addressee was responsible, while in 438 cases the Post Office was responsible. In 2,106 cases the delay or responsibility was not fixed.

42. Do you consider that this is a reasonable proportion on the part of the Post Office?—I think so, and for the people as well.

43. From your long experience as a Postal officer do you find it necessary that the Post Office should have full particulars of complaints?—You could not conduct an inquiry without them.

44. And you should have those particulars while the matter is fresh?—Yes. The Post Office is particularly anxious that complaints should be made so that we should be afforded an opportunity of investigating them.

45. Your Department has always had a desire to serve the public efficiently?—Yes, to the utmost extent.

46. Have any complaints ever been turned down as unworthy of attention?—Not to my knowledge.

47. Some reference has been made to a newspaper called *The Menace* having been delayed or detained after having been sent for by Mr. Seabrook: can you give any explanation of what occurred?—The case was dealt with by the Assistant Secretary at Wellington.

48. Can you give any explanation of the fact that some one thought it necessary to mark the letter sent by Mr. Seabrook requesting the paper to be sent to him "Prohibited"?—I think there were two officers who were responsible for the error in marking it. It is probable that one of the officers forgot that the prohibition had been removed.

49. You know now that *The Menace* was put upon the prohibited list under instructions from the Postmaster-General?—Yes; the prohibition was put on in June, 1914, and removed in August.

50. Section 28 is one of the few sections under which the Post Office is entitled to detain postal matter. If the Postmaster-General has reasonable grounds to suppose that any person in New Zealand or elsewhere is engaged in receiving money relating to horse-racing or to other games, promoting lotteries, receiving money under pretence of foretelling the future, or is engaged in any fraudulent or immoral business, or in advertising directly or indirectly the treatment of diseases of the sexual organs?—Yes.

51. That was the occasion on which *The Menace* came under the ban?—Yes. I may say that the particular paper mentioned is not the only paper that has contravened that section of the Act: the section has also been applied to other papers. When the Post Office knew that there was evidence relating to that particular case action was taken, but it was not taken until the matter had been submitted to the Solicitor-General. Upon the receipt of his advice that the publication should be stopped the ordinary machinery was put into motion. The prohibition was afterwards removed except in respect of copies that contravened the Post and Telegraph Act, 1908.

52. Are there publications published in other countries which are altered so as to comply with the New Zealand conditions before they are sent out here?—Yes; I believe that is the case.

53. That is to say, objectionable matter will be eliminated?—Yes.

54. You have not heard of *The Menace* offending in this respect since the prohibition was removed?—That is so.

55. Therefore it was entitled to the free use of the Post Office since then?—That is so.

56. You issue instructions to your officers regularly, do you not?—We publish instructions to our officers every fortnight in the form of a circular. Every officer has to peruse these instructions, and has to sign them to show that he has made himself acquainted with them. Then there are district orders, and it is the duty of every officer to make himself acquainted with them.

57. I suppose a Postal officer, being human, may sometimes forget?—Oh, yes; I expect some of them might sometimes forget.

58. Is it reasonable to suppose that the officer under whose notice *The Menace* came had forgotten that the prohibition order had been removed?—It seems to be a reasonable explanation.

59. Has it occurred to you that there is any connection between the activities and aims of *The Menace* and the Roman Catholic element in this country?—I have never read the paper, and cannot say.

60. *Mr. Ostler.*] Have you ever been Chief Postmaster?—No.

61. Then, I take it that you would not know so much about the duties of the Chief Postmaster as the duties of high office?—I have been connected with the Chief Post Office.

62. But most of your experience has been gained at the high office?—Yes.

63. You have never been a sorter of letters in your life?—Oh, yes, I have; I sorted letters for four or five years.

64. Is there any reason why, when these ministers' letters were held up on Saturday morning, the Censor should not have done with them in time to have delivered them on Saturday afternoon?—I cannot say. I can only say that they were handed to the Censor.

65. The Censor is a Postal officer paid by the Department?—He is the Censor, and as such we do not question him.